

King County Office of Emergency Management Podcasts ***Disasters: Are you ready?***

Auf Wieder Bye Bye

This is my final Podcast as the Director for the King County Office of Emergency Management. I've been thinking about what I might say. First I'd like to thank my staff with whom I've worked these past 11 years. Some have come and gone. All have contributed to this region's ability to mitigate, prepare for, respond to and recover from disasters. The values of the OEM staff include dedication to service, and a strong work ethic. Much has been accomplished and the credit for our strong reputation regionally and in the nation is appropriately due in no small part to their individual efforts.

I have also been given the opportunity to provide direction to our program with little interference from my superiors. My direct boss has been Paul Tanaka who is also leaving King County after almost 30 years of experience. I always felt that I could go to Paul with any issue and get his honest opinion, and when needed help in solving thorny problems. His departure from King County will leave a big hole.

And, Ron Sims as County Executive is a big idea type of guy. Our move towards a regional focus for our office has been supported by him and is an area of emphasis for the county as a whole. The Regional Communications and Emergency Coordination Center that is a \$30M state-of-the-art facility would not have happened without his leadership. He also, with other regional leaders pushed for seismic mitigation projects for the county "before" the Nisqually Earthquake, not after the quake.

Project Impact TV would not have happened without the support of both King County Television and encouragement from Marc Pease, Rainier Communications. These Podcasts and my Blog, Eric's Corner would not have been possible without the technical support from my talented staff members past and present.

I've talked extensively about the "We" factor in regional activities and how we need to get past the "Me, My, I" aspect of looking out only for number one. None of our progress in regional planning, administration of Homeland Security Grants, purchase of equipment, Urban Search and Rescue Team, Regional Public Information Network, Regional Public Education, or the Critical Infrastructure Planning and Strategic Plan for Region 6 could have been accomplished without you, our regional partners.

You make the "we" possible. Everyone has contributed by innumerable meetings and planning sessions that need to continue. Since it is the planning process, not the plan that makes us a stronger region. To our private sector partners, including the media in all its forms, you have made us a national model of public-private sector engagement. Thank you for that, and please stay engaged.

I see a bright future for King County and the larger Central Puget Sound region. The foundation has been laid, and now you just need to keep building in the months and years ahead. I plan on staying in touch and watching your progress. Consider me your biggest fan and cheerleader! Keep going, don't quit, never give up on becoming a stronger region.

And, lastly to our citizens. You are the linchpin for our ability to be a resilient region. To those who have become better prepared I say, "Way to go!" To those who are still waiting for the right time, today can be that day. Don't delay—tomorrow may be too late to protect both yourself and the people you love.

Perhaps there will be more Podcasts in the future—stay tuned to the internet. Until then, I'll say "Auf Wieder Bye Bye" which is a corrupted German version of Goodbye until I see you again.